Appendix A: Cumulative Projects List

Appendix A presents a summarized list and subsequent description of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects that have been evaluated in conjunction with the impacts of an alternative to determine if they have any additive effects on a particular resource. These projects were included in the cumulative effects analysis presented in Chapter III of this document.

Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

- Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campgrounds Improvements
- El Portal Concept Design
- El Portal Road Improvements Project (Segment D)
- Indian Cultural Center
- Tuolumne Meadows Concept Design Plan
- Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan
- Visitor Use and Floodplain Restoration in East Yosemite Valley Project
- Yosemite Lodge Area Redevelopment
- Yosemite Village Interim Parking Improvements
- Yosemite Valley Multi-Use Trail (West Yosemite Valley)

Present Actions

- Cook's Meadow Ecological Restoration
- Curry Village Employee Housing
- Fern Spring Restoration
- Glacier Point Road Project
- Parkwide Invasive Plant Management Plan
- Utilities Master Plan/East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan
- Yosemite Valley Shuttle Bus Stop Improvements

Past Actions

- Cascades Diversion Dam Removal
- Happy Isles Fen Habitat Restoration Project
- Lower Yosemite Fall Project
- Merced River Ecological Restoration at Eagle Creek Project
- Merced Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
- Replacement/Rehabilitation of Yosemite Valley Sewer Line Project
- Yosemite Valley Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
- Yosemite Valley Shuttle Bus Procurement

Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campgrounds Improvements**

Description: A site plan is being developed for east Yosemite Valley to implement actions called for in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*. The project area generally extends south of the Merced River from the eastern boundary of Housekeeping Camp to Happy Isles, and encompasses the area along Tenaya Creek for proposed campsites. The site plan will ensure that all related actions proposed for the east Valley are implemented in a logical, feasible, and cost-effective manner. Most of the actions will not begin for several years, but in the meantime, the site plan will result in a more detailed picture of how and in what order the projects in the east Valley should be implemented. Following are examples of the many actions identified in the *Yosemite Valley Plan* (NPS 2000a) for east Yosemite Valley:

- Reconfiguring campgrounds at Upper and Lower Pines
- Adding campsites at the new South Camp and Tenaya Creek Campgrounds
- Removing Curry Orchard and restoring the area to natural conditions
- Constructing new visitor cabins-with-bath in Curry Village
- Relocating the Curry Village ice rink
- Providing new and reconfigured food service and concession facilities at Curry Village
- Relocating the concessioner stable
- Converting Southside Drive to two-way traffic
- Constructing a fire station in the Curry Village area

A Finding of No Significant Impact was issued in February 2004.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **El Portal Concept Plan**

Description: The *Yosemite Valley Plan* calls for relocating employee housing, administrative offices, and parking from Yosemite Valley to El Portal. The Concept Plan will provide a comprehensive site plan for the specific layout and design of administrative facilities, including employee housing, offices, and parking areas in the El Portal area. This plan will address the specific functions and spatial requirements of the facilities that the *Yosemite Valley Plan* recommends to be located in El Portal. Although the *Yosemite Valley Plan* generally outlined the facilities that would be relocated to El Portal, it did not provide specific details for each facility or for the interrelationships between existing, redeveloped, and new facilities. The Concept Plan would evaluate these interrelationships and determine the most efficient use of the limited developable areas in El Portal.

Housing development in El Portal would include the relocation of some beds already in El Portal but within the 100-year flood zone; the relocation of National Park Service and concessioner beds

from the Valley, Arch Rock, and Cascades; and the addition of new beds to accommodate current unmet needs and provide for future growth. Currently 247 beds exist in El Portal; the plan calls for 1,037.

In addition, National Park Service and concessioner administrative offices will be relocated out of the Valley. National Park Service headquarters and administrative functions would be relocated and combined with existing National Park Service operations facilities at Railroad Flat, in the western portion of El Portal. Depending on land development constraints in El Portal or other considerations, the relocated headquarter functions for both the National Park Service and concessioner could be relocated to neighboring communities.

The final area of potential development in El Portal, as outlined for the Concept Plan in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*, is the construction of parking areas. Employees who live west of El Portal along the Highway 140 corridor and work in Yosemite Valley could drive to a parking area in El Portal and take employee shuttles into the park. Approximately 60 parking spaces would be provided at El Portal for this purpose.

The development of an Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **El Portal Road Improvements Project** (Segment D)

Description: As part of the road improvements, El Portal Road between Pohono Bridge and the intersection of the Big Oak Flat Road with the El Portal Road (at the west end of Yosemite Valley, also known as Segment D) would be improved. This segment of road has two narrow travel lanes, each 9.5 feet wide. Subsequent to the January 1997 flood, this road failed east of the Big Oak Flat/El Portal Road intersection and was repaired temporarily. The El Portal Road Improvements Project would widen the road to 11-foot lanes and stabilize the road shoulder adjacent to the Merced River. Road improvements would be designed to improve safety and minimize the chance of roadway failures in the future.

The development of an Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Agency Name: American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc. (Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation)

Project Name: **Indian Cultural Center**

Description: An Indian Cultural Center would be established by the American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc. (Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation) at the site of the last-occupied Indian village in Yosemite Valley (west of Camp 4). This center would provide a location for culturally associated Indian people to conduct traditional ceremonies and to practice and teach techniques of traditional lifeways. While the center would be open to the public, access might be limited during special ceremonies. Some public interpretation would occur, but this cultural center

would not replace the primary educational function of the current Indian Village of Ahwahnee at Yosemite Village.

Facilities at the Indian Cultural Center would consist of structures and landscape features typical of an Indian village from the mid- to late-19th century. One large, partly subterranean ceremonial roundhouse and a smaller sweatlodge would be constructed. Approximately 15 cedar bark umachas (conical houses) would be built in the vicinity of the roundhouse and sweatlodge. Plants important for food, basketry, and medicinal uses may be grown. Existing archeological features, such as mortar rocks, would remain in place and be incorporated into the village design. The last extant structure from the original village, a small cabin (the former Westley and Alice Wilson home) currently being used as a National Park Service office, would be moved back to the village and adaptively reused as the cultural center office. A new kitchen and restroom facility would be constructed. Utilities (water, sewer, propane, unimproved road access, and electrical service) would be provided. Screening would be established where necessary to visually separate the cultural center and Northside Drive, Yosemite Lodge, Camp 4, and the Valley Loop Trail. The Valley Loop Trail could be relocated to a route south of the cultural center to minimize intrusions. Overnight parking for scheduled activities would be provided at the Indian Cultural Center or other administrative areas.

The environmental compliance for this project was finished in September 2003. The American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc. is presently preparing fundraising plans and activities to support this project.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Multi-Use Trail to West Yosemite Valley**

Description: Approximately 80% of Yosemite's 4 million visitors per year stop at Yosemite Valley destinations. Bicyclists, hikers, visitors using wheelchairs, and those with strollers find that the multi-use paved trail in the east Valley ends abruptly near Swinging Bridge. To continue the trail to west Valley destinations (such as El Capitan or Bridalveil Fall), users must either confront automobile traffic by traveling along the edge of a busy roadway—a potentially life-threatening safety hazard—or return to private vehicles, ending an important aspect of their recreational experience and adding to traffic noise, emissions and congestion. This project would provide an accessible trail, separate from automobile traffic, to allow convenient, safe, accessible, and enjoyable access to destinations in the west Valley. The project would be accomplished as a shared cost partnership between the National Park Service and the nonprofit Yosemite Fund cooperating association.

The project would involve the construction of 4.5 miles of new multi-use paved, wheelchair-accessible trail to points of interest in the west end of Yosemite Valley. Work would include constructing a 3-mile section of paved trail adjacent to Southside Drive from Swinging Bridge to El Capitan Bridge, and a 1.5-mile section along the roadway from El Capitan Bridge to Bridalveil Fall. The project would also include installation of 23,760 linear feet of conduit under the trail to accommodate future communication lines.

The environmental compliance process is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Tuolumne Meadows Concept Plan**

Description: The Tuolumne Meadows, at an elevation of 8,600 feet, is the Sierra's largest subalpine meadow. Current facilities in the Tuolumne Meadows area include a 304-site campground, a visitor center, a service station, a 104-bed lodge, food services, government and concession stable operations, employee housing, a wastewater treatment plant, and several administrative buildings. These facilities support approximately 5,000 park visitors and 200 park staff daily from May through October. Although improvement or relocation has been considered for many of these facilities, there is no comprehensive plan that looks at the entire Tuolumne Meadows area as a whole and determines the desired extent and location of development. A Concept Plan will define management objectives, including resource protection goals for the entire area, and it will identify boundaries for specific types of development. This will allow implementation of management objectives and appropriate facility construction as incremental funding becomes available.

The environmental compliance process for the Tuolumne Meadows Concept Plan is scheduled to begin in 2006.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan**

Description: The development of the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan will bring the park into compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and can be used to guide actions and evaluate the potential impacts of proposed improvement projects within the river corridor. In addition, the watershed on the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River covers over 50% of Yosemite's backcountry areas and wilderness. This plan would be a comprehensive tool for watershed planning and management of sensitive areas within the Tuolumne River watershed. In addition, this plan would include much needed natural and cultural data that have not been previously compiled for the river corridor and its watershed. These data would be used to create effective and modern management tools such as river protection overlays and much needed compliance necessary for managing resources and visitor use in the entire Tuolumne Meadows area as well as the Tuolumne River corridor. The plan would also be an important tool to examine many outstanding issues with the complicated management of the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, including water quality management and watershed issues with the City of San Francisco.

The development of the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Visitor Use and Floodplain Restoration in East Yosemite Valley Project**

Description: The ecological restoration program seeks to restore natural processes to ecosystems so that portions of Yosemite Valley can recover from past human development and activities. A plan is being developed for the ecological restoration of the Upper River, Lower River, North Pines, and the northwest end of Lower Pines campgrounds; Group Camp, Backpackers Camp; Housekeeping Camp within the River Protection Overlay of the Merced River; and The Ahwahnee tennis court in Yosemite Valley. As part of this project, surveys are being conducted for archeological sites; the history of human disturbance in the area is being investigated; the former distribution of meadow, wetland, and forest communities is being investigated; a restoration prescription is being developed that recognizes the retention, modification, or removal of bridges, bicycle paths, riprap, and roads; the necessity and extent of revegetation is being determined; a revegetation strategy is being developed; and monitoring of river channel morphology is being conducted.

Ecological restoration may include:

- Removal of imported fill material
- Removal of abandoned roads and infrastructure
- Re-establishment of natural contours on the land
- Restoration of natural surface and groundwater movement
- Replanting of native vegetation
- Removal of non-native plant and animal species
- Restoration of carbon and nitrogen cycles in degraded soils

The development of an Environmental Assessment is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Yosemite Lodge Area Redevelopment**

Description: This project is tiered off the *Yosemite Valley Plan*. The project collectively known as the Yosemite Lodge Area Redevelopment includes four separate actions as described in the *General Management Plan* (NPS 1980) and the *Yosemite Valley Plan* (NPS 2000a): redevelopment of Yosemite Lodge, redesign of Camp 4, relocation of Northside Drive, and design of the Indian Cultural Center (this action is described further as a separate project below). All actions occur in the Yosemite Lodge area of Yosemite Valley and include the following:

Yosemite Lodge will be changed from a motel type of experience to one more connected to a national park lodge experience in Yosemite Valley.

- Yosemite Lodge facilities in the river protection zone and the floodplain will be removed.

- Camp 4 will be redesigned to accommodate the expansion and improvements called for in the *Yosemite Valley Plan* (NPS 2000a).
- Northside Drive in the Yosemite Lodge and Camp 4 area will be relocated south of the lodge to reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and to provide safer pedestrian access between the lodge and the Lower Yosemite Fall area.
- Through a cooperative agreement with the American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc., an Indian Cultural Center will be established at the site of the last historically occupied Indian village in Yosemite Valley (just west of Camp 4 and Yosemite Lodge). See the project description below.

An Environmental Assessment was prepared for this project in September 2003 and a Finding of No Significant Impact was issued in February 2004.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Yosemite Village Interim Parking Improvements**

Description: In keeping with the actions outlined in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*, an interim project is needed to improve the visitor experience and park operations at the Yosemite Village main day-visitor parking area. The parking area is located south of Yosemite Village and east of Sentinel Bridge, between the Merced River and Northside Drive. This area has hosted a variety of uses over the past 100 years, and has historically been referred to as Camp 6.

The project will include some or all of the following components:

- Parking for day visitors, including recreational vehicles and disabled persons
- The relocation of tour bus loading and unloading facilities
- Roadway realignments to improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic circulation and safety
- Pedestrian/bicycle paths to improve pedestrian/bicycle traffic circulation and safety
- Valley shuttle bus service operations and facilities
- Interpretation facilities, including wayfinding signs
- Other visitor facilities, such as restrooms

The development of an Environmental Assessment is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Present Actions

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Cook's Meadow Ecological Restoration**

Description: This project is restoring a dynamic and diverse wetland ecosystem. The Cook's Meadow restoration project involves the following actions:

- Filling four drainage ditches created by early Euro-American settlers
- Removing a raised, abandoned roadbed and a trail that bisected the meadow

- Reconstructing the trail on an elevated boardwalk that now allows water to flow freely and reduces foot traffic on sensitive meadow plants
- Installing culverts under Sentinel Road to direct runoff into the meadow and restore the natural flow of water from the Merced River during seasonal periods of high water
- Reducing non-native plant species encroaching on native species by using manual, mechanical, and chemical control methods

Project completion is expected at the end of 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Curry Village Employee Housing**

Description: This project includes the design and construction of new employee housing and related facilities to accommodate approximately 217 concessioner employees in the area west of Curry Village in Yosemite Valley. This housing will replace concessioner housing lost in the January 1997 flood. The employee housing units have been designed in accordance with the character of the area, with particular focus on the Curry Village Historic District. The scope of this housing project includes providing parking and access, an employee wellness center, concessioner housing, management offices, maintenance facilities, postal facilities, and housing-related storage.

The compliance for this project was completed in 2004 and construction is expected to begin in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Fern Spring Restoration Project**

Description: The Fern Spring Restoration Project includes the restoration of the Fern Spring area, including plant relocation, construction of a split rail fence, and the installation of interpretive signage.

The compliance for this project was completed in 2004 and the project is expected to be completed in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Repair of the Glacier Point Road Project**

Description: Rehabilitation of the Glacier Point roadway is proposed to repair and resurface existing roadway pavement and drainage facilities. Pavement rehabilitation likely will involve some sort of in-place recycling of the existing deteriorated pavement, followed by the placement of new asphalt paving. All drainage culverts will be examined for condition, capacity, and proper

location. Culverts found to be in poor condition, undersized, and/or poorly located will be replaced in improved locations with properly sized pipes. As necessary, the drainage channels to and downstream of existing culverts will be examined for potential improvements. Existing stone masonry at culvert headwalls and outlets may be salvaged and reused. The proposed pavement rehabilitation work likely can be accomplished within the existing disturbed road corridor. However, culvert relocation or rehabilitation and the improvement of drainage channels to existing culverts may require disturbance of some new areas.

The environmental compliance process is currently underway.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Parkwide Invasive Plant Management Plan**

Description: Today there are over 150 non-native plant species in Yosemite National Park, which is about 10% of the park's flora. Of these, 28 species are listed for control by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, California Department of Food and Agriculture, or California Exotic Pest Plant Council. Species targeted for control in Yosemite include bull thistle, mullein, yellow star thistle, spotted knapweed, perennial pepperweed, purple vetch, rose and burr clovers, Himalayan blackberry, white and yellow sweetclover, non-native wildflowers, and escaped landscaping plants such as foxglove, ox-eye daisy, pink mullein, French broom, tree-of-heaven, and black locust.

The current control program includes using Geographic Positioning System (GPS) technology to map plant populations. Crews then remove plants using a variety of techniques, including hand-pulling. Treated areas are photographed and re-visited each year to assess the results and provide follow-up treatment.

The proposed Parkwide Invasive Plant Management Plan will define a set of comprehensive programs, including the following:

- Education and focused research
- Prioritized prevention and control efforts using a variety of techniques and appropriate mitigation measures
- Systematic monitoring and documentation of invasive plant status and the results of management efforts
- Restoration of ecosystems altered by invasive plants

Control methods being considered include some combination of the following: hand-pulling or using various machines to try and remove plants; releasing predatory insects or fungus to attack plants; educating users and staff about preventative measures; and using chemical treatments derived from natural products like vinegar, or manufactured chemicals like glysophate. Program goals include eradicating (or at least controlling) invasive plant species; preventing new invasions; restoring and maintaining desirable plant communities and healthy ecosystems; enhancing the visitor experience; and educating park staff, partners, and users.

The plan should be completed, and an environmental assessment produced for public review by fall of 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Utilities Master Plan/East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan**

Description: The existing utility infrastructure serving Yosemite Valley was identified in the *Yosemite Valley Plan* as a potential problem due to its age, condition, inadequate capacity, inaccessibility to future facilities, and inappropriate location in environmentally sensitive areas. The National Park Service completed a *Utilities Master Plan* for the east Yosemite Valley in 2003. This plan incorporated information on existing utility conditions and required repairs identified in the *Yosemite Valley Sanitary Sewer Capital Improvement Plan*, completed in 2002. The *Utilities Master Plan* assessed the current condition of utilities (water, wastewater, electric, and communications) in the Valley and the future Valley utility needs based on facilities proposed in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*. The *Utilities Master Plan* was developed to allow efficient relocation and upgrading of utility systems to provide for utility needs while reducing long-term environmental impacts from utility repair and maintenance activities.

An Environmental Assessment on the *Utilities Master Plan* was completed in June 2003 and a FONSI was signed in October 2003. Implementation of the utility improvements will occur in three phases over 10 years. Construction of phase 1 of the improvements is expected to start in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Yosemite Valley Shuttle Bus Stop Improvements**

Description: This project consists of the preparation of preliminary design plans, environmental compliance documents, and construction drawings; the construction of six 10 by 80-foot concrete braking pads; and the rehabilitation or replacement of 94,000 square feet of asphalt road approaches.

Construction is expected to begin in late 2004 or early 2005.

Past Actions

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Cascades Diversion Dam Removal**

Description: The Cascades Diversion Dam was located on the main stem of the Merced River at the far west end of Yosemite Valley. The dam was a timber "crib" structure with associated concrete abutments. Removing the dam was part of the overall intent of the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* and the *Yosemite Valley Plan* to restore free-flowing conditions to the Merced Wild and Scenic River. In its deteriorated condition, the dam presented a significant public health and safety hazard due to the potential for uncontrolled collapse. Cascades Diversion Dam was located adjacent to El Portal Road.

Removal of the structure and related facilities was completed in 2004.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Happy Isles Fen Habitat Restoration Project**

Description: The Happy Isles Fen is a 2-acre wetland immediately west of the Happy Isles Nature Center in east Yosemite Valley. In 1928, the National Park Service filled in about 3 additional acres of the fen to create a parking lot. The asphalt parking lot was removed in 1970, though imported fill remained. The area impacted by parking lot construction was restored to wetland conditions by removing imported fill and associated upland vegetation, and revegetating with native wetland plants.

This project was completed in the fall of 2003.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Lower Yosemite Fall Project**

Description: This project consists of improving and rehabilitating the physical infrastructure at the 56-acre Lower Yosemite Fall area. The project work includes rebuilding/rehabilitating trails; removing several trail segments; rebuilding/rehabilitating five pedestrian bridges; constructing one new pedestrian bridge; removing one pedestrian bridge; removing the existing parking area and revegetating it to natural conditions; constructing a new shuttle bus stop; replacing/relocating the restroom; creating new access points; fabricating and installing new directional signs; creating a meeting area for groups; restoring portions of forest and creekside habitat to natural conditions; installing amenities such as bike racks, picnic tables, public telephones, trash cans, and wayfinding signs; enlarging the viewing areas near the base of the fall; and providing educational exhibits.

This improvement project will enhance a world-class visitor experience, create a loop trail system that is fully accessible to people with mobility impairments, reduce the perception of crowding

and congestion at main views and along the trail, and improve the hydrology of the braided stream system by replacing the narrow bridges that replace the natural stream flow.

To address removal of the tour bus loading/unloading and parking area from the Lower Yosemite Fall area, replacement loading/unloading and parking spaces will be provided for tour buses. Long-term tour bus loading and unloading would occur at the future new transit center in Yosemite Village.

Project completion is expected in 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Merced River Ecological Restoration at Eagle Creek**

Description: Eagle Creek flows into Yosemite Valley immediately west of the Three Brothers rock formations and joins the Merced River about one-half mile downstream from Yosemite Lodge. The creek banks of the reach of Eagle Creek between Northside Drive and the Merced River are badly eroded and only sparsely vegetated, partly due to trampling by pedestrians. The eroded riverbank was recontoured, then revegetated; the trampled river terrace was decompacted; and fences were constructed to direct visitors to sandbars for river access. The ecological restoration effort involved the following:

- Plug remaining portions of abandoned sewage lines with concrete and remove the manhole and the concrete structure that crosses the creek bed.
- Restore the eroded creek channel using methods previously tested on the banks of the Merced River. Restoration techniques require building up the bank with willow cuttings, woody debris, rock, and mulch.
- Revegetate the bank of Eagle Creek with native shrubs, cuttings, and seeds.

Redirect visitors to access the river in a more appropriate location that will not cause bank erosion.

This project was completed in 2003.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Merced Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement**

Description: In 1987, the U.S. Congress designated 122 miles of the Merced River—from the headwaters in the Yosemite Wilderness to the impoundment at Lake McClure—as a Wild and Scenic River. According to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, a river is eligible for designation if it possesses what the act calls *outstandingly remarkable values*. These are the rare, unique, or exemplary qualities that set it apart from all other rivers in the nation. The goal of designating a river as Wild and Scenic is to preserve its free-flowing condition and protect and enhance its distinct values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The National

Park Service manages 81 miles of the Merced River, encompassing both the main stem and the South Fork in Yosemite National Park and the El Portal Administrative Site. This designation gives the Merced River special protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and requires the managing agencies to prepare a comprehensive management plan for the river and its immediate environment.

Pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requirements, the National Park Service prepared and issued the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* (NPS 2000b) in June 2000. After the Record of Decision was signed in August 2000, the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* entered a lengthy litigation process. The validity of the plan was challenged based on contentions that the National Park Service failed to prepare a plan that protected and enhanced the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Merced River, thereby violating the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* was upheld in U.S. District Court with the exception that language be added to specifically indicate how the plan amends the park's *General Management Plan.* However, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals or the Court) further ruled that the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* was deficient on two grounds. In its October 27, 2003 opinion, the Court stated that the "Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) is invalid due to two deficiencies: (1) a failure to adequately address user capacities; and (2) the improper drawing of the Merced River's boundaries at El Portal." On April 20, 2004, the same court clarified its original opinion, stating that the National Park Service "must prepare a new or revised CMP that adequately addresses user capacities and properly draws the river boundaries in El Portal."

In response to the Court's direction, the National Park Service prepared the *Revised Merced River Plan SEIS*. This revised plan amended the existing *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* to address the two deficiencies identified by the Court and to specify how it amends the *General Management Plan.* This *Revised Merced River Plan SEIS* does not replace the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and FEIS* adopted in 2000, but corrects the deficiencies in its management elements.

The purpose of the *Revised Merced River Plan SEIS* is to produce a revised comprehensive management plan that:

- Protects and enhances the Merced Wild and Scenic River's Outstandingly Remarkable Values and free-flowing condition by adopting a user capacity program that is consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the 1982 Secretarial Guidelines.
- Develops a user capacity program that provides for a diversity of appropriate recreational opportunities and visitor freedom, so long as this does not conflict with the National Park Service mission of protecting natural and cultural resources and the quality of the visitor experience.
- Re-examines the river area boundary based on the Outstandingly Remarkable Values at the El Portal Administrative Site pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act's protection and enhancement mandate.
- Makes appropriate revisions to the park's 1980 *General Management Plan* (as amended), as directed by the 1987 legislation designating the river Wild and Scenic.

The *Revised Merced River Plan SEIS* outlines the National Park Service's User Capacity Management Program for Yosemite National Park. The Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) Framework is a tool developed by the National Park Service to address user capacities and ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources and the visitor experience (Hof and Lime 1997). The VERP process will serve as a regular report card, informing the public on a quarterly basis of the status of Outstandingly Remarkable Values, as well as the management actions being taken to protect and enhance them.

The VERP framework is an iterative, ongoing process that:

- Prescribes what are known as the *desired conditions* for resources and visitor experiences for a given area (not just prescribing a maximum number of visitors).
- Selects specific indicators (i.e., qualities that reflect the overall condition of park resources and visitor experience).
- Sets quantifiable standards, against which the indicator is measured.
- Monitors conditions on the ground.
- Takes responsive and informed management actions as required when standards are not being met.
- Provides regular updates to the public, including an annual report summarizing results of monitoring.
- Continually improves and adjusts the program based on the knowledge gained over time.

These components provide a comprehensive process for taking informed actions to manage all of the elements of visitor use that may influence desired conditions and the Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

The *Revised Merced River Plan SEIS* was completed in June of 2005 and a Record of Decision was signed in July of 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Replacement/Rehabilitation of Yosemite Valley Sewer Line**

Description: This project includes the design and repair of the Yosemite Creek Lift Station Sewer Force Main under Northside Drive from Yosemite Creek Lift Station to the Valley Woodlot, a distance of approximately 4 miles. This project provides for the excavation and removal of the existing pipeline and replacement with high-density polyethylene pipe within the same trench. All appurtenances, valves, and drains would be replaced. In addition, this project includes repair and/or replacement of 29 sanitary sewer manholes, completion of 600 feet of slip lining, and spot repairs of the gravity trunk main in the El Portal area. It includes temporarily bypassing the existing alignment and reconstructing all drains and culvert crossings.

Project implementation is expected in early 2005.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Yosemite Valley Plan**

Description: The National Park Service Pacific West Regional Director signed the Record of Decision for the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan and its Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* on December 29, 2000. The purpose of the Yosemite Valley Plan is to present a comprehensive management plan for Yosemite Valley—from Happy Isles at the east end of the Valley to the intersection of the El Portal and Big Oak Flat Roads near the Cascades area at the west end. It also presents actions in adjacent areas of the park and the El Portal Administrative Site that directly relate to actions proposed in Yosemite Valley. The specific purposes of the *Yosemite Valley Plan* within Yosemite Valley are to:

- Restore, protect, and enhance the resources of Yosemite Valley
- Provide opportunities for high-quality, resource-based visitor experiences
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Provide effective park operations, including employee housing, to meet the mission of the National Park Service

The Record of Decision was signed in December 2000.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Yosemite Valley Shuttle Bus Procurement**

Description: As called for in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*, a new fleet of low-emissions, low noise, fuel-efficient shuttle buses have been purchased to replace the existing fleet of 1986 diesel buses currently servicing Yosemite Valley. The recommendation of hybrid electric-diesel buses was based on findings that they result in 50 to 60% fewer emissions than conventional diesel buses, with an improvement in fuel economy and noticeably quieter operations.

The new buses will be in use in 2005.

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